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MAID OF BATH

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A C O M E D Y.

[Price 1s. 6d.]

THE

MAID OF BATH.

A

THE

COMEDY.

MAID OF BATH.

As it was Performed at the

ACOMEDY
THEATRE ROYAL

IN THE

HAYMARKET. Price 1s. 6d. R. E. T.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR JOHN WHEBLE, FLEET STREET.

MDCCLXXIII.

2

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MAID OF BATH.

A
COMEDY,
OF THREE ACTS,

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LONDON:

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MDCCLXXVIII.

MARY OF BATH

Written by Mr. GARRICK

W HO but has read, if you have read at all,
 Of one, the Jacobite, the Jacobite,
 He was a bold, stout, able-bodied man,
 To clear the World of her, her, her, her plan,
 Whether a monster had within his bowels,
 A young and tender virgin to devour,
 To cool his blood, Jack, like a skillful surgeon,
 Bled well the monster, and released the virgin;
 Like the best doctors, did a method learn,
 Of curing fevers never to return.
 May'st thou, Jack, when thou art dead,
 I have my virgin, and my monster too.
 Tho' I can't boast, like Jack, a list of slain,
 I wield a lancet and can strike a vein;
 To his Hercules and my nerves are weak,
 He cleave his foes, I only strike a vein;
 As Indians wound their slaves to please the court,
 I'll tickle mine, even Jack, to make you sport.
 To prove myself an humble imitator,
 Gowns are wick, and Jack hands for latice;
 By ropes and figures, as it fancy hits,
 Passions rise most, and I'll drive to brutes;
 All talk and write in all the nation;
 Court, city, town, and country, all to action;
 Each daily paper, and each letter;
 Passions are lovers, and courtiers' leeches.

May

P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

WHO but has read, if you have read at all,
Of one, they *Jack the Giant-killer* call?
He was a bold, stout, able-bodied man,
To clear the World of *fee, faw, fum*, his plan,
Whene'er a *monster* had within his power
A young and tender *virgin* to devour,
To cool his blood, *Jack*, like a skilful surgeon,
Bled well the *monster*, and releas'd the *virgin*:
Like the best doctors, did a method learn,
Of curing fevers never to return.
Mayn't I this *Giant-killing* trade renew?
I have my *virgin*, and my *monster* too.
Tho' I can't boast, like *Jack*, a list of slain,
I wield a lancet and can breathe a vein:
To his Herculean arm my nerves are weak,
He cleft his foes, I only make mine squeak:
As Indians wound their slaves to please the court,
I'll tickle mine, *great Sirs*, to make you sport.
To prove myself an humble imitator,
Giants are *vices*, and *Jack* stands for satire:
By tropes and figures, as it fancy suits,
Passions rise *monsters*, men sink down to brutes;
All talk and write in allegoric diction,
Court, city, town, and country run to fiction!
Each daily paper allegory teaches—
Placemen are *locusts*, and *contractors* *leeches*:

P R O L O G U E.

Nay, even *Change-Alley*, where no bard repairs,
Deals much in fiction to pass off their wares;
For whence the roaring there—*from bulls and*

bears!
The gaming fools are *doves*, the *knaves* are *rooks*,
Change-Alley bankrupts waddle out *lame ducks!*
But ladies, blame not you your gaming spouses,
For you, as well as they, have *pigeon-houses*;
To change the figure, formerly I have been,
To straggling follies only *whipper-in*;
By royal bounty rais'd, I mount the back
Of my own hunter, and I keep the *pace*;
Tollyo!—a rank old far we now pursue,
So strong the scent, you'll run him full in view;
If we can't kill such *brutes* in human shape,
Let's frighten 'em, that your *chickens* may escape;
Rouse 'em, when o'er their tender prey they're
grumbling,

And rub their gums at least to mar their *mum-*
bling.

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. CUMBERLAND.

Spoken by Mrs. JEWELL.

CONFIDING in the justice of the place,
To you the *Maid of Bath* submits her case:
Wrong'd, and defeated of three several spouses,
She lays her damages for nine full houses.
Well, Sirs, you've heard the parties, *pro* and *con*.
Do the *pro*'s carry it? Shall the suit go on?
Speak hearts for us, to them we make appeal:
Tell us not what you think but what you feel:
Ask us, why bring a private cause to view!
We answer, with a sigh—because 'tis true:
For tho' invention is our Poet's trade,
Here he but copies parts which others play'd;
For on a ramble, late one starry night,
With *Amodeo*, his familiar sprite,
High on the wing, by his conductor's side,
This guilty scene the indignant Bard descry'd;
Soaring in air, his ready pen he drew,
And dash'd the glowing satire as he flew:
For in these rank luxuriant times there needs
Some strong bold hand to pluck the noxious weeds.
The rake of fixty, crippl'd hand and knee;
Who sins on claret, and repents on tea:
The witless Maccaroni, who purloins
A few cant words, which some pert gambler
coins:

The undomestic Amazonian Dame,
Staunch to her *Coterie*, in despite of fame;
These are the victims of our Poet's plan,
But most, that *monster*—an unfeeling man.
When such a foe provokes him to the fight,
Tho' maim'd, out sallies the puissant Knight:
Like *Withrington*, maintains the glorious strife,
And only yields his laurels—with his life.

Dramatis Personæ.

Sir Christopher Cripple,	Mr. Moody.
Mr. Flint,	Mr. Foote.
Major Racket,	Mr. Aickin.
Billy Button,	Mr. Weston.
Peter Poullice,	Mr. Fearon.
Fillup,	Mr. Davis.
Mynheer Sour Crout,	Mr. Castle.
Monf. de Jarsey,	Mr. Loyd.
John,	Mr. Jacobs.
Lady Catherine Goldstream,	Mrs. Fearon.
Mrs. Linnet,	Miss Platt.
Miss Linnet,	Mrs. Jewel.
Maid,	Mrs. Weston.
Waiters, &c.	

THE
MAID OF BATH.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Bear Inn, at Bath.

Enter Fillup.

WHY John, Roger, Raphy, Harry
Buckle; what a dickens are become
of the lads? Can't you hear?---Zure, zure,
these whelps are enow to make a man maz'd!

Enter several Waiters.

All. Coming, Sir.

Fill. Coming! ay, zo be Christmafs, I
think---where be'tt thee gwain, boy? What,
B I reckon

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I reckon thou ca'st not zee for thy eyes--- here, take the candle, and light the gentle-folk in.

Enter John.

John. Carry a couple of candles into the Daphne. [*Exit Waiter.*]

Fill. John, who is it be a come?

John. Major Racket, in a chay and four, from the Devizzes.

Fill. What, the young youth, that last zeason carry'd away we'un Mrs. Muzlinzes prentice?—

John. Miss Patty Prim from the Grove.---

Fill. Ay, zure—thee dost know her well enough.

John. The same.

Fill. Zure, zure! then we shall have old doing and by; he's a deadly wild spark thee dost know---

John. But as good a customer as comes to the Bear.

Fill. That's zure enough: then why dost not run and light 'em in? Stay, gy I the candle, I woole go and light 'em in my-zelf.

Racket [*without.*]

Rack. Give the post boys half a guinea between them.

John.

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John. Ay, there is some life in this chap; these are your guests that give spirit to Bath: your paralytical people that come down to be parboiled and pumped, do no good, that I know, to the town, unless indeed to the physical tribe: how I hate to see an old fellow hobble into the house, with his feet wrapt in flannel, pushing forth his fingers like a cross in the hands to point out the different roads on a common---hush!

Enter Racket and Fillup.

Fill. I hope, mester, you do zee your way; there be two steps you do know; well, zure, I be heartily glad to zee your honour at Bath.

Rack. I thank you, my honest friend Fillup; what have you many people in town?

Fill. There ben't a power, please your honour, at present; some zick folk that do no zort of zarvis, and a few layers that be come off a zircuit, that's all.

Rack. Birds of passage, ha, Fillup!

John. True, Sir; for at the beginning of term, when the woodcocks come in, the others fly off.

Rack. Are you there, honest Jack?

John. And happy to see your honour in town.

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Rack. Well, master Fillup, and how go you on?--Any clubs fixed as yet?

Fill. No, Zir, not to zay fix'd; there be Parson Pulruddock from the Land's End; Master Evan Thomas, a Welch attorney, two Bristol men, and a few port drinking people that dine every day in the Lion; the claret club ben't expected down till the end of next week---

Rack. Any body in the house that I know?

Fill. Yes, zure----behind the bar, there be Sir Christopher Cripple, fresh out of a fit of the gout, drinking a drop of punch along wy mester Peter Poultee, the potter carrier on the Parade.

Rack. The gazettes of the Bath, the very men I want; give my compliments to the gentlemen, and tell them I should be glad of their company--but perhaps it may be troublesome for Sir Christopher?

Fill. No, no, not at all; at present, he is a little tender for zure, but I warrant on he'll make a shift to hobble into the room.

[Exit Fillup.

Rack. Well, Jack, and how fares it with you? you have throve I hope since I saw you?

John. Throve! no, no, Sir; your honour knows that during the summer, taverns and turnspits have but little to do at the Bath.

Rack,

THE MAID OF BATH. 5

Rack. True; but what is become of your colleague, honest Ned, I hope he has not quitted his place?

John. The share he had in your honour's intrigue with Miss Prim, soon made this city too hot for poor Ned.

Rack. Then why did not the fool go to London with me? The fellow has humour, spirit, and sings a good song. I intended to have recommended him to one of the theatres.

John. Why, Sir, Ned himself had a bias that way; but his uncle, Alderman Surcingle the sadler, a piece of a puritan, would not give his consent.

Rack. Why not?

John. He was afraid that kind of life might corrupt or endanger Ned's morals; so he has set him up in a Bagnio at the end of Long-Acre.

Rack. Nay, if the fellow falls after such a security—

Enter Sir Christopher Cripple, Fillup and Peter Poultrice.

Sir Chr. [without] At what a rate the rascal is running? Zounds! I believe the fellow thinks I can foot it as fast as Eclipse; slower and be----- Where is this rakehelly, rantipole?

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rantipole?--Jack, set me a chair. So, Sir; you must possess a good share of assurance to return to this town after the tricks you have played---Fillup, fetch in the punch---Well, you ungracious young dog, and what is become of the wench? Poor Patty! and here too my reputation is ruined as well as the girl's.

Rack. Your reputation! that's a good jest.

Sir Chr. Yes, firrah, it is: and all owing to my acquaintance with you; I, forsooth, am called your adviser; as if your contriving head and profligate heart stood in need of any assistance from me.

Rack. Well, but my dear Sir Kit, how can this idle stuff affect you?

Sir Chr. How? easy enough; I will be judged now by Poultrice---Peter, speak the truth; before this here blot in my escutcheon, have you not observed when I went to either a ball or breakfasting, how eager all the girls gathered round me, gibing, and joking, and gigling; gad take me, as facetious and free as if I were their father.

Poul. Nothing but truth.

Fill. That's truth, to my zertain knowledge, for I have zeen the women folk tit-tering, 'till they were ready to break their zides when your honour was throwing your double tenders about.

Sir Chr.

THE MAID OF BATH. 7

Sir. Cbr. True, honest Fillup--before your curst affair; neither maid, widow, or wife was ashamed of conversing with me; but now, when I am wheeled into the room, not a soul under seventy will venture within ten yards of my chair; I am shuned worse than a leper in the days of King Lud; an absolute hermit in the midst of a croud; speak, Fillup, is not this a melancholy truth?

Fill. Very molycolly zure.---

Sir. Cbr. But this is not all; the crop-eared curs of the city have taken into their empty heads to neglect me; formerly, Mr. Mayor could not devour a custard, but I received a civil card to partake; but now, the rude rascals, in their bushy bobs, brush by me without deigning to bow; in short, I do not believe I have had a corporation crust in my mouth for these six months: you might as well expect a minister of state at the Mansion House, as see me at one of their feasts.

Fill. His honour tells nothing but truth.

Sir Cbr. So that I am almost famished as well as forsaken.

Fill. Quite famish'd, as a body may zay, mester.

Sir Cbr. Oh; Tom, Tom, you have been a curst acquaintance to me; what a number

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ber of fine turtle and fat haunches of venison
has your wickedness lost me.

Rack. My dear Sir Kit, for this I merit
your thanks; how often has Dr. Carawitchet
told you, that your rich food and champaigne
would produce nothing but poor health and
real pain?

Sir Cbr. What signifies the prattle of such
a punning puppy as he? What, I suppose,
you would starve me, you scoundrel? When
I am got out of one fit, how the devil am I
to gather strength to encounter the next? Do
you think it is to be done by sipping and slop-
ing? [*drinks*] But no matter; look you, Major
Racket, all between us is now at an end; and,
Sir, I should consider it as a particular favour
if you would take no further notice of me;
I sincerely desire to drop your acquaintance,
and as for myself, I am fixed, positively fixed,
to reform.

Rack. Reform! ha, ha.

Sir Cbr. Reform; and why not? You
shall see, the whole city shall see; as soon
as ever I get to my lodgings, I will send for
Luke Lattitat and Codicil, and make a
handsome bequest to the hospital.

Rack. Stuff---

Sir Cbr. Then I am resolved to be carried
every day to the twelve o'clock prayers, at
the Abbey, and regularly twice of a Sunday.

Rack.

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Rack. Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Ch. Ha, ha, ha; you may laugh, but I'll be damn'd if I don't; and if all this don't recover my credit, I am determin'd, besides, to hire a house in Harlequin-Row, and be a constant hearer at the Countess's chapel---

Rack. And so, perhaps, turn out a field-preacher in time.

Sir Chr. I don't know but I may.

Rack. Well then, my dear Sir Christopher, adieu; but if we must part, let us part as friends should, not with dry lips, and in anger; Fillup, take care of the knight. [*Fillup fills the glasses.*] Well, faith, my old croney, I can't say but I am heartily sorry to lose you; many a brave batch have we broach'd in our time.

Sir Chr. True, Tom, true.

Rack. Don't you remember the bout we had at the Tuns, in the days of Plump Jack? I shall never forget, after you had felled old Falstaff with a pint bumper of burgundy, how you bestrode the prostrate hero, and in his own manner cried, Crown me ye spirits that delight in gen'rous wine.

Sir Chr. Vanity, mere vanity, Tom, nothing but vanity.

Rack. And then another day at the—but replenish, Fillup, the bowl is not empty.

Sir Chr. Enough, enough.

C

Rack.

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Rack. What, don't flinch man--it is but to finish the----come, Sir Christopher, one tender squeeze.

Sir Chr. Take care of my hand; none of your old tricks, you young dog.

Rack. Gentle as the lick of a lap-dog; there--What a clock is it, Fillup?

Fill. I'll tell you, mester, [*looks on his watch.*] just turn'd a fix---

Rack. So soon; hang it, Sir Kit, it is too early to part; come, what say you to one supper more? but one to the sacred feelings of friendship---honest Fillup knows your taste, he will toss you up a---

Sir Chr. Not a morsel, Tom, if you would give me the universe.

Rack. Poh, man! only a Sandwich or so---Fillup, what hast got in the house?

Fill. A famous John Dorey, two pair of soles, and there be a joint of Lansdown mutton; and then, you do know, my Molly be famous in making marrow puddens.

Rack. A fine bill of fare---Come, Knight, what do you choose?

Sir Chr. Me! why you seem to have forgot what I told you just now---

Rack. Your design to reform---not at all; and I think you quite right; perfectly so, as I hope to be saved; but what needs all this hurry? to-morrow is a new day, it will then
be

THE MAID OF BATH. 11

be early enough---Fillup, send us in just what you will.

Sir Cbr. You are a coaxing, cajoling young dog---Well, if it must be so, Fillup, it must; Fillup, get me an anchovey toast, and do you hear, and a red herring or two, for my stomach is damnably weak.

Fill. I shall, to be zure. [Exit.]

Rack. So that's settled---now, Poulrice, come forward; well, my blades, and what news have you stirring amongst you?

Poul. Except a little run of sore throats about the beginning of Autumn, and a few feeble fellows that dropt off with the leaves in October, the town is intolerable---

Rack. Pox of the dead and the dying; but what amusements have you got for the living?

Poul. There is the new play-house, you know---

Rack. True; but as to the musical world, what hopes have we there? any of the opera people among you? apropos---what is become of my little flame, La Petite Rosignole, the lively little Linnet? is she still---

Sir Cbr. Lost, totally lost---

Rack. Lost! what, left you? I am sorry for that---

Sir Cbr. Worse, worse.

Rack. I hope she an't dead.

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Sir Chr. Ten thousand times worse than all that.

Rack. How the deuce can that be?

Sir Chr. Just going to be buried alive---to be married.

Rack. Poh! is that all? That ceremony was, indeed, formerly looked upon as a kind of metaphysical grave, but the system is changed, and marriage is now considered as an entrance to a new and better kind of life.

Sir Chr. Indeed!

Rack. Pshaw! who talks now of the drudgery of domestic duties, of nuptial chains, and of bonds---mere obsolete words; they did well enough in the dull days of Queen Bess; but a modern lass puts on fetters to enjoy the more freedom, and pledges her faith to one, that she may be at liberty to bestow her favours on all.

Sir Chr. What vast improvements are daily made in our morals! what an unfortunate dog am I to come into the world at least half a century too soon! what would I give to be born twenty years hence! there will be damn'd fine doings then, hey Tom? But I'm afraid our poor little girl won't have it in her power to profit by these prodigious improvements.

Rack. Why not?

Sir

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Sir Cbr. Oh, when once you hear the name of her partner—

Rack. Who is it?

Sir Cbr. An acquaintance of yours---only that old fusty, shabby, shuffling, money-loving, water-drinking, mirth-marring, amorous old hunks, Master Solomon Flint.

Rack. He that enjoys---I mean owns, half the farms in the country.

Sir Cbr. He, even he.

Rack. Why, he is sixty at least; what a filthy old goat! but then, how does this design suit with his avarice? the girl has no fortune.

Sir Cbr. No more than what her talents will give her.

Rack. Why, the poltroon does not mean to profit by them?

Sir Cbr. Perhaps, if his family should chance to increase---but I believe his main motive is the hopes of an heir.

Rack. For which he must be indebted to some of his neighbours; in that point of light, indeed, the matter is not so much amiss; it is impossible she can be fond of the fellow, and it is very hard, with the opportunities that this place will afford, if, in less than a month, I don't---

Sir Cbr. This place; why you don't think he'll trust her here for an hour?

Rack.

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Rack. How!

Sir Chr. Not a moment; the scheme is all settled; the rumbling old family-coach carries her immediately from the church door to his moated, haunted old house in the country.

Rack. Indeed!

Sir Chr. Where, besides the Argus himself, she will be watched by no less than two brace of his sisters, four as malicious, musty old maids as ever were soured by solitude, and the neglect of the world.

Rack. A guard not to be corrupted or cozened. Why, Sir Christopher, in a christian country, this must not be suffered--- What? a miserable tattered old fellow like him to monopolize such a tempting creature as her!

Sir Chr. A diabolical plan.

Rack. Besides, the secluding, and immuring a girl possessed of her elegant talents, is little better than robbing the world.

Sir Chr. Infamous! worse than a rape; but where are the means to prevent it?

Rack. Much might be done, if you would lend us your aid.

Sir Chr. Me! of what use can I---and so, you rascal, you want to employ me again as your pimp?

Rack.

THE MAID OF BATH. 15

Rack. You take the thing wrong; I only wish you to stand forth, my dear Knight, and like myself, be the protector of innocence, and a true friend to the public.

Sir Chr. A true friend to the public! a fine stalking horse that; but, I fear, like other pretenders, Tom, when your own private purpose is served, the poor public will be left in the lurch: but, however, the poor girl does deserve to be saved, and if I could do any thing not inconsistent with my plan of reforming---

Rack. That was spoke like yourself--upon what terms are you and Flint at present.

Sir Chr. Oil and vinegar are not so opposite.

Rack. Poullice, you smoke a pipe with him sometimes; pray who are your party?

Poul. Mynheer Sour Crout, Monsieur de Jarsey the port manufacturer, Billy Button the taylor, Master Flint and I, most evenings take a whiff here.

Rack. Are you all in his confidence on this great occasion?

Poul. Upon this case we have had consultations, but Billy Button is first in his favour, he likes his prescription the best.

Rack. From this quarter we must begin the attack; could we not contrive to convene this illustrious senate to-night?

Poul.

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Poul. I should think easily enough.

Rack. But before you meet here.

Poul. Without doubt.

Rack. My dear Poultrice, will you undertake the commission?

Poul. I will feel their pulses, to oblige Sir Christopher Cripple.

Sir Chr. But, Peter, dost really think this rash fool is determined?

Poul. I believe, Sir Christopher, he is firmly persuaded, that nothing will allay this uncommon heat in his blood, but swallowing the pill matrimonial.

Rack. We must contrive at least to take off the gilding, and see what effect that will have on his courage. [Exit Poultrice.

Sir Chr. Well, Major, unfold; what can you mean by this meeting?

Rack. Is it possible you can be at a loss, you who have so long studied mankind?

Sir Chr. Explain.

Rack. Can't you conceive what infinite struggles must have been felt by this fellow before he could muster up courage to engage in this dreadful perilous state?---How often have you heard the proverbial puppy affirm, that marriage was fishing for a single eel among a barrel of snakes? What infinite odds, that you laid hold of the eel, and then
a million

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a million to one but he slipped through your fingers?

Sir Chr. True, true.

Rack. Can't you, then, guess what will be his feelings and fears when it comes to the push? Do you think the public opinion, his various doubts of himself, and of her, the pride of his family, and the loud claims of avarice, his ruling passion 'till now, won't prove near an equipoise to his love?

Sir Chr. Without doubt.

Rack. At the critical period, won't the concurring advice of all his associates, think you, destroy the balance at once?

Sir Chr. Very probably, Tom, I confess.

Rack. As to our engines, there is no fear of them: Billy Button you have under your thumb; I'll purchase a pipe of port of De Jarsey, and we are sure of old Sour Crout for a hamper of hock.

Sir Chr. Right, right; but after all, what is to become of the girl? Come, Tom, I'll have no foul play shewn to her.

Rack. Her real happiness is part of my project.

Enter Fillup.

Fill. Here be Mynheer Sour Crout and Mounseer De Jarsey a come.

D

Sir

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Sir Chr. We will attend them—only think, Tom, what a villain you will be to make me the secret instrument of any more mischief.

Rack. Never fear.

Sir Chr. Particularly too, now I am fixed to reform.

Rack. It would be criminal in the highest degree.

Sir Chr. Ay, not your hypocritical face--- I am half afraid Tom to trust you; I'll be hanged if you ha'n't some wicked design yourself on the girl; but however, I wash my hands of the guilt.

Rack. My dear Knight, don't be so squeamish; but---the gentlemen within---stay---who have we here---Ah, my old friend Master Button---

Enter Button.

Butt. Your worship is welcome to town ---but where is Sir---Oh---I understood as how your honour had sent for me all in a hurry---I should have brought the patterns before if I had them—the worst of my enemies can't say but Billy Button is punctual---here they be—I received them to-night by Wiltshire's waggon, that flies in eight days.

Sir

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Sir Chr. To-morrow, Billy, will do; take a seat.

Butt. I had rather stand---

Sir Chr. I wanted to talk to you upon another affair----what, I suppose, you are very busy at present?

Butt. Vast busy, your honour.

Sir Chr. This marriage, I reckon, takes up most of your time.

Butt. Your honour!

Rack. Miss Linnet, and your old master Flint, you know.

Butt. O! Ay! but the squire does not intend to cut a dash till the spring.

Sir Chr. No!---nothing happen'd, I hope affairs are all fixed?

Butt. As a rock---I am sure now, it can't fail; because why, I have peremptory orders to scour and new line the coachman and footman's old frocks; and am, besides, to turn the lace, and fresh button the suit his honour made up twenty years ago comes next Lent, when he was sheriff for the county.

Rack. Nay, then it is determined---

Butt. Or he would never have gone to such an expence.

Sir Chr. Well, Billy, and what is your private opinion, after all, of this match?

Butt. It is not becoming, your honour knows, for a tradesman like me to give his---

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Rack. Why not? don't you think now, Billy, it is a bold undertaking for a man at his time of life?

Butt. Why to be sure his honour is a little stricken in years, as a body may say; and take all the care that one can, time will wear the nap from even superfine cloth: stitches tear, and elbows will out, as they say--

Sir Cbr. And besides, Bill, the bride's a mere baby--

Butt. Little better, your Honour; but she is a light bit of stuff, and I am confident will turn out well in the wearing.--I once had some thoughts myself of taking measure of Miss.

Rack. Indeed!

Butt. Yes; and, to my thinking, had made a pretty good progress; because why, at church of a Sunday she suffered me to look for the lessons, and moreover, many a time and oft we have sung psalms out of the very same book.

Rack. That was going a great way.

Butt. Nay, besides, and more than all that, she has at this precious minute of time a pincushion by her side of my own presentation.

Rack. Ay; and how came the treaty broke off?

Butt.

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Butt. Why, who should step in in the nick, but the very squire himself?

Sir Chr. I am afraid, Bill, your beauty is a little bit of the jilt.

Butt. No, your worship, it is all along with her mother; cause her great aunt, by her father's side was a clergyman's daughter, she is as pragmatic and proud as the Pope; so, forsooth, nothing will please her for Miss, but a bit of quality binding.

Rack. I knew the refusal could not come from the girl; for, without a compliment, Billy, there is no comparison between you and she---why, you are a pretty, slight, tight, light, nimble---

Butt. Yes---very nimble and slight, and we are both of a height, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Chr. Why love has made Billy a poet.

Butt. No, no, quite an accident, as I hope to be kissed.

Rack. And your rival is a fusty, foggy, lumbering log.

Butt. For all the world like my goose! plaguy hot and damned heavy, your honour.

Sir Chr. Why Billy blazes to day.

Butt. And though my purse, mayhap, ben't so heavy as his'n, yet I contrive to pay every body their own.

Rack. I dare say.

Butt.

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Butt. Ay, and have besides two houses in Avon Street ; and, perhaps, a bit or two of land in a corner.

Sir Chr. O ! the curmudgeonly rogue !

Butt. And moreover, if Madam Linnet talks of families, I would have her to know that I have powerful relations as well as herself---there's Tommy Button my uncle's own son, that has an employment under the government---

Sir Chr. Ay Billy, what is it ?

Butt. At this very time he is an exciseman at Wapping ; and besides, there is my cousin Paul Puff, that kept the great pastry cook's shop in the Strand, now lives at Brentford, and is made a justice of the peace.

Rack. As this is the case, I don't think it will be difficult yet to bring matters to bear.

Sir Chr. If Billy will but follow directions.

Butt. I hope your honour never found me deficient.

Sir Chr. We will instruct you farther within. Major Racket, your hand.

Butt. Let me help you ; folks may go farther and fare worse, as they say---why, I have some thoughts, if I can call in my debts, to retire into the country, and set up for a gentleman.

Rack. Why not ? one meets with a great number

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number of them who were never bred to the business.

Butt. I an't much of a mechanic at present; I does but just measure and cut.

Rack. No!

Butt. I don't think that I have sat cross-leg'd for these six years.

Rack. Indeed!

Butt. And who can tell, your honour, in a few years, if I behaves well, but like cousin Puff, I may get myself put in the commission.

Sir Chr. The worshipful William Button, Esquire---it sounds well, I can tell you, Billy; there have been magistrates made of full as bad materials as you.

ACT

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A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Enter Mrs. Linnet and Miss.

Mrs. Lin.—**Y**ES, Kitty, it is in vain to deny it. I am convinced there is some little, low, paultry passion that lurks in your heart.

Miss Lin. Indeed, my dear Mother, you wrong me.

Mrs. Lin. Indeed, my dear Miss, but I don't; what else could induce you to reject the addresses of a lover like this? Ten thousand pounds a year! Gads my life, there is not a lady in town would refuse him, let her rank be ever so—

Miss Lin. Not his fortune, I firmly believe.---

Mrs. Lin. Well; and who now-a-days marries any thing else? Would you refuse an estate, because it happen'd to be a little encumber'd? You must consider the man in this case as a kind of mortgage.

Miss

THE MAID OF BATH. 25

Miss Lin. But the disproportion of years---

Mrs. Lin. In your favour, child; the incumbrance will be the sooner remov'd---

Miss Lin. Then, my dear mother, our minds; how very widely they differ; my nature is liberal and frank, though I am but a little removed from mediocrity; his heart, in the very bosom of wealth, is shut to every social sensation-----

Mrs. Lin. And yet, Miss, this heart you have had the good luck to unlock. I hope you don't urge his offers to you as a proof of his passion for money? why you forget yourself, Kate; who, in the name of wonder, do you think you are? What, because you have a baby face, and can bawl a few ballads----

Miss Lin. Nay, Madam, you know I was never vain of my talents; if they can procure me a decent support, and in some measure repay my father and you for their kind cultivation----

Mrs. Lin. And how long are you sure your talents, as you call 'em, will serve you. ---Are a set of features secure against time? wont a single sore throat destroy the boasted power of your pipe? But suppose that should not fail, who can insure you against the whim of the public; will they always continue their favour?

Miss Lin. Perhaps not?

E

M

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Mrs. Lin. What must become of you then ? now by this means you are safe, above the reach of ill-fortune ; besides, child, to put your own interest out of the question, have you no tender feelings for us ? Consider, my love, you don't want for good nature ; your consent to this match will, in the worst of times, secure a firm and able friend to the family.

Miss Lin. You deceive yourself, indeed, my dear mother ; he, a friend ! I dare believe the first proof you will find of his friendship, will be his positive commands to break off all correspondence with every relation I have.

Mrs. Lin. That's a likely story indeed--- Well, child, I must set your father to work, I find what little weight my arguments have.

[*Lady Catharine Coldstream, without.*]
Is Mrs. Linnet within ?

Mrs. Lin. Oh ! here comes a protectress of yours, Lady Catharine Coldstream, submit the matter to her, she can have no views, is well read in the ways of the world, and and has your interest sincerely at heart.

Enter Lady Catharine Coldstream.

La. Cath. How is aw wi you, Mistress Linnet and Miss ? what a dykens is the matter

THE MAID OF BATH. 27

ter wi Miss---she seems got quite in the dumps; I thought you were aw ready to jump out of your skins at the bonny prospect afore you.

Mrs. Lin. Indeed, I wish your Ladyship would take Kitty to task, for what I can say signifies nothing.

La. Cath. Ah, that's aw wrang; what has been the matter, Miss Kitty? you ken well enow that children owe an implicit concession to their parents---it is na for bairns to litigate the will of their friends.

Mrs. Lin. Especially, my Lady, in a case where their own happiness is so nearly concerned; there is no persuading her to accept Mr. Flint's offers.

La. Cath. Gad's mercy, Miss, how comes aw this about, dinna you think you hae drawn a braw ticket in the lottery of life; do na you ken that the mon is a laird of aw the land in the country.

Miss Lin. Your Ladyship knows, Madam, that a real happiness does not depend upon wealth.

La. Cath. Ah, Miss, but it is a bonny ingredient; don't you think, Mrs. Linnet, the lass has got some other lad in her head?

Mrs. Lin. Your Ladyship joins in judgment with me; I have charg'd her, but she stoutly denies it.

La.

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La. Cath. Miss, you munna be bashful; an you solicit a cure, your physician must ken the cause of your malady.

Miss Lin. Your ladyship may believe me, Madam, I have no complaint of that kind.

La. Cath. The lass is obstinate; Mistress Linnet, cannot yourself gi a guess?

Mrs. Lin. I can't say that I have observ'd—indeed, some time ago, I was inclin'd to believe Mr. Button—

La. Cath. What, yon taylor in Stall-Street; ah, Mrs. Linnet, you are aw out in your guess; the lass is twa weel bred, and twa saucy to gi her heart to sik a burgis as he, Willy Button! nae, he is nae the lad awaw.

Mrs. Lin. Major Rackit, I once thought; but your ladyship knows his affairs took a different turn.

La. Cath. Ah, Racket! that's another man's matter; lasses are apt enough to set their hearts upon scarlet; a cockade has muckle charms wi our sex; well, Miss, comes the wind fra that corner?

Miss Lin. Does your ladyship think, to dislike Mr. Flint, it is absolutely necessary to have a prepossession for somebody else?

La. Cath. Mrs. Linnet, an you will withdraw for a while, perhaps Miss may throw aff her reserve, when there's nobody by but our—

THE MAID OF BATH. 29

ourselves; a mother, you ken weel, may prove ane too many sometimes.

Mrs. Lin. Your ladyship is most exceedingly kind—d'ye hear, Kitty, mind what her ladyship says, do my dear, and be rul'd by your friends, they are older and wiser than you. [Exit.

La. Cath. Well, Miss, what's the cause of aw this? what makes you so averse to the will of your friends?

Miss Lin. Your ladyship knows Mr. Flint:

La. Cath. Ah, unco weel.

Miss Lin. Can your ladyship then be at a loss for a cause?

La. Cath. I canna say Mr. Flint is quite an Adonis; but wha is it that in matrimony gets aw they wish? When I intermarried with Sir Launcelot Coldstream, I was een sik a spree lafs as yoursel; and the baronet bordering upon his grand climacteric; you mun ken, Miss, my father was so unfaucy as to gang out with Charley in the forty-five. After which, his fidelity was rewarded in France by a commission that did na bring in a pawbee, and a pension that he never was paid.

Miss Lin. Infamous ingratitude!

La. Cath. Ay, but I dinna think they will find ony mare sic fools in the North.

Miss Lin. I hope not,

La. Cath.

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La. Cath. After this, you canna think, Miss, there was mickle filler for we poor bairns that were left; so that, in troth, I was glad to get an establishment; and ne'er heeded the disparity between my guidman and mysel.

Miss Lin. Your ladyship gave great proofs of your prudence; but my affairs are not altogether so desperate.

La. Cath. God's-mercy, Miss! I hope you dinna make any comparison between Lady Catharine Coldstream, wha has the best blood in Scotland that rins in her veins.

Miss Lin. I hope your ladyship does not suppose---

La. Cath. A lady lineally descended from the great Ossian himself, and ally'd to aw the illustrious houses abroad and at home---

Miss Lin. I beg, Madam, your Ladyship---

La. Cath. And Kitty Linnet; a little play actor, wha gets applauded or hiss'd just e'en as the mobility wulls.

Miss Lin. I am extremely concern'd, that----

La. Cath. Look'ye, Miss, I will cut matters short; you ken well enow, the first notice that e'er I took of you was in your acting in Allan Ramsay's play of Patie and Roger; ere sin I hae been your fast friend; but an you continue obstinate, and will na succumb

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cumb, I shall straitwith withdraw my protection.

Miss Lin. I shall be extremely unhappy in losing your Ladyship's favour.

La. Cath. Miss, that depends entirely on yourself.

Miss Lin. Well, Madam, as a proof how highly I rate it, and how desirous I am of obeying the commands of my parents, it shan't be my fault if their wishes are not accomplish'd.

La. Cath. That's aw wright now, Kitty; gi me a kiss, you are the prudent lass that I thought you. Love, Miss, is a pastime for boys and grown girls; aw stuff, fit for nothing but novels and romances, there is na thing solid, na stability.

Miss Lin. Madam----

La. Cath. But to fix your fortune at once, to get above the power of the world; that, child, is a serious concern.

Mrs. Linnet [without].

Mrs. Lin. With your Ladyship's leave---

La. Cath. You may come in, Mrs. Linnet; your daughter is brought to a proper sense of her duty, and is ready to coincide with your wish.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Lin. We are infinitely obliged to your Ladyship; this is lucky, indeed; Mr. Flint is now, Madam, below, and begs to be admitted.

La. Cath. Ah! the mon comes in the nick: shew him in in the instant.

[*Exit. Mrs. Linnet.*]

Now Kitty's your time; dinna be shy la's, but throw out aw your attractions, and fix him that he canna gang back.

Miss Lin. Madam, I hope to behave---

La. Cath. Gad's mercy, how the girl trembles and quakes; come, pluck up a heart, and consider your aw is at stake.

Miss Lin. I am afraid I shall be hardly able to say a single----

La. Cath. Suppose then you sing; gi him a song, there is nothing moves a love-sick loon mair than a song----(*Noise without.*) I hear the lad on the stairs; but let the words be aw melting and soft—the Scotch tunes, you ken, are unco pathetic; sing him the Birks of Endermay, or the Braes of Balendine, or the-----

Enter Flint and Mrs. Linnet.

---Maister Flint, your servant. There, Sir, you ken the lass of your heart; I have laid
for

THE MAID OF BATH. 33

for you a pretty solid foundation, but as to the edifice you must e'en erect it yoursel.

[Exit Lady Catharine.

Flint. Please your Ladyship, I will do my endeavour. Madam Linnet, I have made bold to bring you a present, a small paper of tea, in my pocket---you will order the tea-kettle on.

Mrs. Lin. O, Sir, you need not have---

Flint. I won't put you to any expence.

[Exit Mrs. Linnet.

Well, Miss, I understand here by my Lady, that she, that is, that you, with respect and regard to the---ah, ah,---won't you please to be seated?

Miss Lin. Sir?---My lover seems as confus'd as myself. [Aside.

Flint. I say, Miss, that as I was a saying, your friends here have spoke to you all how and about it.

Miss Lin. About it! about what?

Flint. About this here business that I come about. Pray, Miss, are you fond of the country?

Miss Lin. Of the country!

Flint. Ay; because why, I think it is the most prettiest place for your true lovers to live in---something so rural; for my part, I can't see what pleasure pretty Misses can take in galloping to plays, and to balls, and

F

such

34 THE MAID OF BATH.

such expensive vagaries ; there is ten times more pastime in fetching walks in the fields, in plucking of daisies----

Miss Lin. Haymaking, feeding the poultry, and milking the cows.

Flint. Right, Miss.

Miss Lin. It must be own'd they are pretty employments for ladies

Flint. Yes ; for my mother used to say, who, between ourselves, was a notable housewife,

Your folks that are idle,
May live to bite the bridle.

Miss Lin. What a happiness to have been bred under so prudent a parent !

Flint. Ay, Miss, you will have reason to say so ; her maxims have put many a pound into my pocket.

Miss Lin. How does that concern me ?

Flint. Because why, as the saying is,
'Tho' I was the maker
You may be the partaker.

Miss Lin. Sir, you are very obliging.

Flint. I can tell you, such offers are not every day to be met with ; only think, Miss, to have victuals and drink constantly found you, without cost or care on your side ; especially now meat is so dear.

Miss Lin. Considerations by no means to be slighted.

Flint.

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Flint. Moreover, that you may live and appear like my wife, I fully intend to keep you a coach.

Miss Lin. Indeed!

Flint. Yes; and you shall command the horses whenever you please, unless during the harvest, and when they are employ'd in plowing and carting; because the main chance must be minded, you know.

Miss Lin. True, true.

Flint. Tho' I don't think you will be vastly fond of coaching about; for why, we are off of the turnpike, and the roads are deadly deep about we.

Miss Lin. What, you intend to reside in the country?

Flint. Without doubt; for then, Miss, I shall be sure to have you all to myself.

Miss Lin. An affectionate motive;---but even in this happy state, where the most perfect union prevails, some solitary hours will intrude, and the time, now and then, hang heavy on our hands.

Flint. What, in the country, my dear Miss? not a minute---you will find all pastime and jollity there; for what with minding the dairy, dunning the tenants, preserving and pickling, nursing the children, scolding the servants, mending and making, roasting, boiling and baking, you won't have a

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moment to spare; you will be merry and happy as the days are long.

Miss Lin. I am afraid the days will be hardly long enough to execute so extensive a plan of enjoyment.

Flint. Never you fear; I am told, Miss, that you write an exceeding good hand.

Miss Lin. Pretty well, I believe.

Flint. Then, Miss, there is more pleasure in store; for you may employ any leisure time that you have in being my clerk, as a Justice of Peace---you shall share sixpence out of every warrant, to buy any little thing that you want.

Miss Lin. That's finely imagined---As your enjoyments are chiefly domestic, I presume you have contriv'd to make home as convenient as can be; you have, Sir, good gardens, no doubt?

Flint. Gardens! ay, ay; why before the great parlour window there grows a couple of yews, as tall as a mast and as thick as a steeple; and the boughs cast so delightful a shade, that you can't see your hand in any part of the room.

Miss Lin. A most delicate gloom---

Flint. And then there constantly roosts in the trees a curious couple of fowls, which I won't suffer our folks to disturb, as they make so rural a noise in the night---

THE MAID OF BATH. 37

Miss Lin. A most charming duet---

Flint. And besides, Miss, they pay for their lodgings, as they are counted very good mousers, you know.

Miss Lin. True; but within doors, your mansion is capacious, and---

Flint. Capacious! yes, yes, capacious enough; you may stretch your legs without crossing the threshold; why, we go up and down stairs into every room of the house---to be sure, at present, it is a little out of repair; not that it rains in, where the casements are whole, at above five or six places at present.

Miss Lin. Your prospects are pleasing?

Flint. From off the top of the leads; for why, I have boarded up most of the windows, in order to save paying the tax; but to my thinking, our bed-chamber, Miss, is the most pleasantest place in the house.

Miss Lin. Oh, Sir, you are very polite.

Flint. No, Miss, it is not for that; but you must know, that there is a large bow window facing the east, that does finely for drying of herbs; it is hung round with hatchments of all the folks that have dy'd in the family; and then the pigeon-house is over our heads.

Miss Lin. The pigeon-house!

Flint.

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Flint. Yes; and there, every morning, we shall be wak'd by day-break, with their murmuring, cooing and courting, that will make it as fine as can be.

Miss Lin. Ravishing! Well, Sir, it must be confess'd, you have given me a most bewitching picture of pastoral life; your place is a perfect Arcadia---but I am afraid half the charms are deriv'd from the painter's flattering pencil.

Flint. Not heighten'd a bit, as yourself shall be judge---and then, as to the company, Miss, you may have plenty of that when you will, for we have as pretty a neighbourhood as a body can wish.

Miss Lin. Really.

Flin. There is the widow Kilderkin, that keeps the Adam and Eve at the end of town, quite an agreeable body, indeed---the death of her husband has drove the poor woman to tipple a bit---Farmer Dobbins's daughters, and Doctor Surplice, our curate, and wife, a vast conversible woman, if she was not altogether so deaf.

Miss Lin. A very sociable set---why, Sir, placed in this paradise, there is nothing left you to wish.

Flint. Yes, Miss, but there is---

Miss Lin. Ay; what can that be?

Flint.

THE MAID OF BATH. 39

Flint. The very same that our grandfather had---to have a beautiful Eve by my side--- Could I lead the lovely Linnet nothing loath to that bower---

Miss Lin. Oh, excess of gallantry!

Flint. Would her sweet breath but deign to kindle, and blow up my hopes!

Miss Lin. Oh, Mr. Flint! I must not suffer this for your sake; a person of your importance and rank---

Flint. A young Miss of your great merit and beauty---

Miss Lin. A gentleman so accomplish'd and rich---

Flint. Whose perfections are not only the talk of the Bath, but of Bristol, and the whole country round---

Mrs. Lin. Oh, Mr. Flint, this is too---

Flint. Her goodness, her grace, her duty, her decency, her wisdom and wit, her shape, slenderness and size, with her lovely black eyes, so elegant, engaging, so modest, so prudent, so pious, and, if I am rightly inform'd, possessed of a sweet pretty pipe.

Miss Lin. This is such a profusion---

Flint. Permit me, Miss, to solicit a specimen of your delicate talents.

Miss Lin. Why, Sir, as your extravagant compliments have left me nothing to say, I think the best thing I can do is to sing.

SONG.

40 THE MAID OF BATH.

S O N G.

The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
Invites the tuneful birds to sing;
And as they warble from each spray,
Love melts the universal lay, &c.

Flint. Enchanting ! ravishing sounds ! not
the Nine Muses themselves, nor Mrs. Badde-
ley, is equal to you.

Miss Lin. Oh, fie !

Flint. May I flatter myself that the words
of that song were directed to me ?

Miss Lin. Should I make such a confession,
I should ill deserve the character you have
been pleas'd to bestow.

Enter Lady Catherine Coldstream.

Lady Cath. Come, come, Master Flint,
I'll set your hart at rest in an instant---you
ken well enow, lasses are apt to be modest
and shy, then take her answer fra me---pre-
pare the minister, and aw the rest of the
tackle, and you will find us ready to gang to
the kirk.

Flint. Miss, may I rely on what her lady-
ship says ?

Lady Cath. Gad's mercy ! I think the
man is bewitch'd ! he wonna take a woman
of quality's word for sik a trifling thing as a
wife.

Flint.

THE MAID OF BATH. 41

Flint. Your ladyship will impute it all to my fears---then I will strait set about getting the needful.

La. Cath. Gang your gait as fast as you list.

Flint. Lord bless us! I had like to have forgot---I have, please your Ladyship, put up here in a purse, a few presents, that if a miss would deign to accept---

La. Cath. Ah! that's aw wright, quite in the order of things; as matters now stand, there is no harm in her accepting presents fra you, master Flint; you may produce.

Flint. Here is a Porto Bello pocket-piece of Admiral Vernon, with his image a one side, and six men of war all in full sail on the other---

La. Cath. That's a curious medallion.

Flint. And here is half a crown of Queen Ann's as fresh as when it came from the mint---

La. Cath. Yes, yes, it is in very fine preservation.

Flint. In this here paper, there are two mourning rings; that, which my Aunt Bother'em left me, might serve very well, I should think, for the approaching happy occasion.

La. Cath. How! a mourning---

G

Flint.

42 THE MAID OF BATH.

Flint. Because why, the motto's so pat;
True till death shall stop my breath.

La. Cath. Ay, ay, that contains mickle
morality Miss.

Flint. And here is, fourthly, a silver coral
and bells, with only a bit broke off the coral
when I was cutting my grinders; this was
given me by my godfather Slingby, and I
hope will be in use again before the year
comes about.

La. Cath. Na doubt, na doubt; leave
that matter to us---I warrant we impede the
Flint family from sawing into oblivion.

Flint. I hope so---I should be glad to have
a son of my own, if so be, but to leave him
my fortune, because why, at present there
is no mortal that I care a farthing about.

La. Cath. Quite a philosopher-----then
dispatch, master Flint, dispatch; for you ken
at your time of life, you hanna a moment to
lose.

Flint. True, true, your ladyship's entirely
devoted---Miss, I am your most affectionate
slave.

[Exit.

La. Cath. A sawzy lad, this master
Flint; you see, Miss, he has a meaning in
aw that he does.

Miss Lin. Might I be permitted to alter
your ladyship's words, I should rather say,
meannefs.

La.

THE MAID OF BATH. 43

La. Cath. It is na mickle matter what the mon is at present, wi a little management you may mold him into any form that you list.

Miss Lin. I am afraid he is not made of such pliant materials; but, however, I have too far advanced to retire; the die is cast--- I have no chance now, unless my Corydon should happen to alter his mind---

La. Cath. Na, Miss; there is na danger in that, you ken the treaty is concluded under my mediation, an he should see to draw back, Lady Catharine Colstream would soon find means to punish his perfidy--- Come away Miss.

Exeunt.

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A C T III.

S C E N E I.

*Sir Christopher Cripple, Sour Crout, De
Jarsey, Major Racket and Poullice, dis-
covered sitting at a table.*

Sir Christopher Cripple.

WE must take care that Flint does not
surprise us, for the scoundrel is very
suspicious.

Rack. There is no danger of that---I lodged
him, safely at Linnet's---Button stands cen-
try at the end of the street, so that we shall
be instantly apprised of every motion he
makes.

Poul. Well managed, my Major.

Sir Chr. Yes, yes; the cunning young
dog knows very well what he is about.

Sour Cr.

THE MAID OF BATH. 45

Sour Cr. Upon my word, Major Racket has very fine disposition to make a figure at de head of de army; five or six German campaigns will—ah, dat is de best school in de world for make de var.

Sir Chr. Five or six German campaigns!

Sour Cr. Ay, Chevalier; vat you say to dat?

Sir Chr. O mynheer! nothing at all---a German war, for ought I know, may be a very good school, but it is a damned expensive education for us.

De Jar. C'est vrai, Chevalier, dat is all true, cet pay la dal place is the grave for the Frenchman and de fine English guinea.

Sir Chr. True, Monsieur; but our guineas are rather worse off than your men, for they stand no chance of rising again.

De Jar. Ha, ha, ha! dat is very well---le Chevalier have beaucoup d'esprit, great deal of wit, ma foi.

Rack. I think the Knight is in luck---but don't let us loose sight of our subject. You, Gentlemen, are all prepar'd, perfect in the several parts you are to play?

All. Ay, ay.

Rack. You, Mynheer Sour Crout?

Sour Cr. I understand---I will pique his honour---the pride of his famille.

Rack. Right. Poultice---

Poul.

46 THE MAID OF BATH.

Poult. I will alarm him on the side of his health.

Sir Chr. Next to his money, the thing in the world he most minds.

Rack. You, De Jarsey, and Button, will employ all your eloquence on the prudential side of the---Oh, dear Jarsey! here is a draft for the pipe of Port that I promis'd.

De Jar. Dat is right.

Rack. The only receipt to get bawds, bo-roughs, or Frenchmen, [*Afide.*]---Oh, here Billy comes----

Enter Button.

Well Billy, what news?

Butt. I am vast afraid all matters are concluded at last.

Rack. Ay! prithee why so?

Butt. Because why, in ten minutes after you went, out bolted the Squire, and hurry scurry'd away to layer Lattitat's, who, you know, arrests his tenants, and does all his concerns.

Rack. True; well----

Butt. I suppose to give him orders about drawing the writings.

Sir Chr. Not unlikely---but you think Flint will come to the club?

Butt.

THE MAID OF BATH. 47

Butt. There is no manner of doubt; because why, he holloo'd to me from over the way---what, Billy, I suppose you are bound to the Bear; well, boy, I shall be hard at your heels---and he seem'd in prodigious vast spirits.

Rack. I am mistaken if we don't lower them a little. Well, Gentlemen, the time of action draws nigh. Knight, we must decamp.

Sir Chr. When you will.

Rack. I think, Sir Christopher, you lodge in the same house with the Linnets?

Sir Chr. Just over their heads.

Rack. Then thither we'll go---ten to one, if our plot operates as I expect, the hero will return to their house.

Sir Chr. Most likely.

Rack. We are come to a crisis, and the catastrophe of our piece can't be very far off.

Sir Chr. I wish, like other plays, it don't end in a marriage.

Rack. Then I shall be most confoundedly bit---but come, Knight.

Sir Chr. Rot you, I do as fast as I can---I can't think, Racket, what the deuce makes thee so warm in this business; there is certainly something at bottom that I don't comprehend.

Flint.

48 THE MAID OF BATH.

Flint. But do, Major, have pity on the poor girl; upon my soul she is a sweet little tyren, so innocent and----

Rack. Pooh, pooh; don't be absurd—I thought that matter had been fully explain'd; this, Knight, is no time to look back—but suppose now I should have a little mischief in hand---

Sir Cbr. How! of what kind?

Rack. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest Knight, till done, and then applaud the deed.

Sir Cbr. It is very extraordinary, Major Racket, if you are determined to make the devil a visit, that you can't pay it alone; or if you must have company, what a pox makes you think of fixing on me?

Rack. Hey day! ha, ha! What, in the vapours again?—we must have some more punch---

Sir Cbr. You are mistaken; that won't have power to change the state of my mind, my resolves are too firm---

Rack. And who wishes to break them? I only ask your assistance to-night; and your reformation, you recollect, don't begin 'till to-morrow.

Sir Cbr. That's true, indeed; but no human power shall prevail to put it off any longer than to-morrow.

Rack.

THE MAID OF BATH. 49

Rack. Or the next day at farthest.

Sir Chr. May I be ——— if I do.

[*Exeunt Rack. and Sir Chr.*]

Poult. Come lads, light your pipes---which of us shall be first to attack? Billy----

Butt. Won't it be rather too bold for me to begin?

Poult. Then let us leave it to chance---
Hush! I hear him lumbering in---compose your looks, let his reception be solemn and grave.

Butt. Leave that chair for him.

Enter Flint.

Flint. How fares it, my lads? Well, boys, matters are settled at last---the little Kate has comply'd, and to-morrow is fix'd for the day.

Poult. You have settled it then?

Flint. As firm as a rock.

Poult. So you can't retreat if you would?

Flint. Retreat! I have no such design.

Poult. You han't?

Flint. No, to be sure, you great fool; what the deuce would Poultrice be at?

Poult. Nay then, neighbours, what we have been saying will just signify nothing.

Flint. Saying? why you have not heard?
---that is, nobody---

H

Poul.

50 THE MAID OF BATH.

Poult. No, nothing very material—only--- but as the matter is carried so far----

Flint. So far! why I hope you have not found out any flaw---Kitty has not---

Poult. No, no, nothing of that---no, upon my word---I believe a very modest, prudent, good girl, neighbour.

All. No manner of doubt.

Flint. Well then—but what a plague is the meaning of this? You all sit as silent and glum—why can't you speak out with a pox?

Poult. Why, Squire, as we are all your fix'd friends, we have been canvassing this matter amongst us.

Flint. You have?

Poult. Marriage, you know very well, is no trifling affair; too much caution and care can't be us'd---

Flint. That I firmly believe, which has made me defer it so long.

Poult. Pray lend me your hand; how is the state of your health? do you find yourself hearty and strong?

Flint. I think so; that is I—you han't observ'd any bad symptoms of late?

Poult. No; but you us'd to have pains flying about you.

Flint. Formerly; but since I have fix'd my gout to a fit they are gone---that, indeed,

THE MAID OF BATH. 51

deed, lays me up four or five months in a year.

Poult. A pretty long spell; and in such a case, do you think now that a marriage---

Flint. The most best receipt in the world--- why that, man, was one of my motives--- wives, you know, are allow'd to make very good nurfes.

Poult. That, indeed.

Flint. Ay, and then they are always at hand; and besides they don't cost one a far-thing.

Poult. True, true; why you look very jolly, and fresh, does not he?

All. Exceedingly.

Poult. Yet he can't be less than---let me see---wasn't you under old Syntax at Wells?---

Flint. He dy'd the year I left school.

Poult. That must be a good forty year since.

Flint. Come sheep-shearing next.

Poult. Then, Squire, you are hard upon sixty.

Flint. Not far away, Master Poultice.

Poult. And Miss Linnet---sixteen---you are a bold man---not but there are instances, indeed, where men have surviv'd many years such disproportionate marriages as these.

Flint. Surviv'd! why should they not?

52 THE MAID OF BATH.

Poult. But then their stamina must be prodigiously strong.

Flint. Stamina!

Poult. Let us see, Button, there was Doctor Dotage, that married the Devonshire girl, he had a matter of---

Butt. No, no; he dropp'd off in six months.

Poult. True, true, I had forgot.

Flint. Lord have mercy!

Butt. Indeed, an old master of mine, Sir Harry O'Tuff, is alive, and walks about to this day.

Flint. Hey!

Poult. But you forgot where Sir Harry was born, and how soon his lady elop'd.

Butt. In the honey moon; with Captain Pike of the guards; I mind it full well.

Poult. That, indeed, alters the case.

Flint. Well, but Billy, you are not serious in this? you don't think there is any danger of death?

Butt. As to the matter of death, the Doctor knows better than I, because why, that lies in his way; but I shall never forget Colonel Crazy, one of the best customers that ever I had; I never think of him without dropping a tear---

Flint. Why; what was the matter with him?

Butt.

THE MAID OF BATH. 53

Butt. Married Lady Barbary Bonnie, as it might be about midnight on Monday---

Flint. Well---

Butt. But never more saw the sweet face of the sun.

Flint. What! did he die?

Butt. Within an hour after throwing the stocking.

Flint. Good Lord! that was dreadful indeed---Of what age might he be?

Butt. About your time of life.

Flint. That is vastly alarming. Lord bless me, Bill, I am all of a tremble!

Butt. Ay, truly, it behoves your honour to consider what you are about.

Flint. True.

Butt. Then what a world of money must go; running forwards and backwards to town, and jaunting to see all the fine sights in the place---

Flint. I shan't take her to many of them; perhaps I may shew her the Parliament-house, and plays, and Boodles, and Bedlam, and my Lord Mayor, and the lions.

Butt. Then the vast heap of fine cloaths you must make---

Flint. What occasion for that?

Butt. As you arn't known, there is no doing without; because why, every body passes there for what they appears.

Flint. Right, Billy; but I believe I have found out a way to do that pretty cheap.

Butt. Which way may be that?

Flint. You have seen the minister that's come down to tack us together----

Butt. I have---is he a fine man in the pulpit?

Flint. He don't care much to meddle with that; but he is a prodigious patriot, and a great politician to boot---

Butt. Indeed!

Flint. And has left behind him, at Paris, a choice collection of curious rich cloaths, which he has promis'd to sell me a pen-north.

Poult. Pooh, what Billy talks of are trifles to the evils you are to expect---to have a girl to break in upon your old ways; your afternoon's nap interrupted, and perhaps not suffer'd to take your pipe of a night.

Flint. No!

Poult. All your former friends forbidden your house----

Flint. The fewer come in, the less will go out; I shan't be sorry for that.

Poult. To make room for her own numerous clan----

Flint. Not a soul of them shall enter the doors.

THE MAID OF BATH. 55

Poult. A brood of babes at your board,
whose fathers she herself won't find it easy
to name—

Flint. To prevent that I'll lock her up in
a room.

Poult. The King's-Bench will break open
the door---

Flint. Then I'll turn her out of the house.

Poult. Then her debts will throw you in-
to goal---

Flint. Who told you so?

Poult. A dozen of proctors---

Flint. Then I will hang myself out of the
way.

Poult. So she will become possess'd of her
jointure, and her creditors will foreclose your
estate.

Flint. What a miserable poor toad is a
husband; whose misfortunes not even death
can relieve.

Butt. Think of that, Squire, before it be
too late.

Flint. Well, but friends, neighbours, what
the deuce can I do; are you all of a mind?

De Jar. All, all; dere is no question at
all: what a garson of your antient famille
to take up with a pauvre petite bourgeoise?

Flint. Does that never happen in France?

De Jar.

56 THE MAID OF BATH.

De Jar. Never; but when Monsieur de Baron is very great beggar, and de bourgolfe has damn'd deal de guinea.

Poult. That is none of our case.

Flint. No, no---Mynheer, do your people never make up such matches?

Sour Cr. Never, never---what, a German dishonour his stock! why Mester Flint, should Mistress Linnet bring you de children for de ten generations to come, they could not be chose de Cannons of Stratsbourg.

Flint. No?

Poult. So, Squire, take it which way you will, what dreadful danger you run.

Flint. I do.

Poult. Loss of friends---

Butt. Pipe and afternoon's nap---

Sour Cr. Your famille gone to de dogs---

De Jar. Your peace of mind to de devil---

Poult. Your health----

Butt. Your wealth----

Poult. Plate, money, and manors.

All. Your-----

Flint. Enough, dear neighbours, enough--- I feel it, I feel it too well; Lord have mercy, what a miserable scrape am I in! and here too, not an hour ago, it has cost me the Lord knows what in making her presents.

Poult.

THE MAID OF BATH. 57

Poul. Never mind that; you had better part with half you are worth in the world.

Flint. True, true---well then, I'll go and break off all matters this minute.

Poul. The wisest thing you can do---

Butt. The sooner the better---

Flint. No doubt, no doubt, in the----and yet, Button, she is a vast pretty girl----I should be heartily sorry to loose her----dost think one could not get her on easier terms than on marriage?

Butt. It is but trying, however.

Flint. To tell truth, Billy, I have always had that in my head; and at all events I have thought of a project that will answer my purpose.

Butt. Ay, Squire, what is it?

Flint. No matter---and, do you hear, Billy? should I get her consent, if you will taker her off my hands, and marry her when I begin to grow tired, I'll settle ten pounds a year upon you, for both your lives.

Butt. Without paying the taxes.

Flint. That matter we will talk of hereafter.

[Exit.

Poul. So, so, we have well settled this business, however.

Butt. No more thoughts of his taking a wife.

I

Poul.

58 THE MAID OF BATH.

Poul. He would sooner be ty'd to a gibbet; but, Billy, step after him, they will let you in at Sir Christopher Cripple's; and bring us, Bill, a faithful account.

Butt. I will, I will; but where shall you be?

Poul. Above, in the Phoenix; we won't stir out of the house; but be very exact.

Butt. Never fear. [*Exeunt.*]

Miss Linnet, alone.

Heigh, ho! what a sacrifice am I going to make? but it is the will of those who have a right to all my obedience, and to that I will submit. [*Loud knocking at the door.*] Bless me! who can that be at this time of night? Our friends may err; and projects, the most prudentially pointed, may miss of their aim; but age and experience demand respect and attention, and the undoubted kindness of our parents designs claims, on our parts at least, a grateful and ready compliance.

Enter Nancy.

Miss Lin. Nancy, who was that at the door?

Nancy. Mr. Flint, Miss, begs the favour of speaking five words with you.

Miss

THE MAID OF BATH. 59

Miss Lin. I was in hopes to have had this night at least to myself---where is my mother?

Nancy. In the next room with Lady Catharine, consulting about your cloaths for the morning.

Miss Lin. He is here---very well, you may go. [Exit.

Enter Flint.

Flint. She is alone, as I wished---Miss, I beg pardon for intruding at this time of night, but---

Miss Lin. Sir!

Flint. You can't wonder that I desire to enjoy your good company every minute I can.

Miss Lin. Those minutes, a short space, will place Mr. Flint in your power; if 'till then you had permitted me to---

Flint. Right. But to say the truth, I wanted to have a little serious talk with you of how and about it---I think, Miss, you agree, if we marry, to go off to the country directly.

Miss Lin. If we marry? Is it then a matter of doubt?

Flint. Why, I will tell you Miss; with regard to myself, you know, I am one of
I 2 the

60 THE MAID OF BATH.

the most antientest families in all the country round---

Miss Lin. Without doubt.

Flint. And as to money and lands, in these parts, I believe, few people can match me.

Mrs. Lin. Perhaps not.

Flint. And as to yourself, I don't speak in a disparaging way, your friends are low folks, and your fortune just nothing.

Miss Lin. True, Sir; but this is no new discovery, you have known this---

Flint. Hear me out now as I bring, all these good things on my side, and you have nothing to give me in return but your love, I ought to be pretty sure of the possession of that.

Miss Lin. I hope the properly discharging all the duties of that condition, which I am shortly to owe to your favour, will give you convincing proofs of my gratitude.

Flint. Your gratitude, Miss---but we talk of your love; and of that, if I marry, I must have plain and positive proofs.

Miss Lin. Proofs! of what kind?

Flint. To steal away directly with me to my lodgings.

Miss Lin. Your lodgings!

Flint. There pass the night, and in the morning,

THE MAID OF BATH. 61

morning, the very minute we rise, we will march away to the Abbey.

Miss Lin. Sir!

Flint. In short, Miss, I must have this token of love; or not a syllable more of the marriage.

Miss Lin. Give me patience!

Flint. Come, Miss, we have not a minute to lose; the coast is clear---should somebody come, you will put it out of my power to do what I design.

Miss Lin. Power! Hands off, Mr. Flint. Power! I promise you, Sir, you shall never have me in your power.

Flint. Here, Miss---

Miss Lin. Despicable wretch; from what part of my character could your vanity derive a hope that I would submit to your infamous purpose?

Flint. Don't be in a---

Miss Lin. To put principle out of the question, not a creature that had the least tincture of pride could fall a victim to such a contemptible---

Flint. Why but Miss---

Miss Lin. It is true, in compliance with the earnest request of my friends, I had consented to sacrifice my peace to their pleasure; and tho' reluctant, would have given you my hand.

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Flint. Vastly well.

Miss Lin. What motive, but obedience to them, could I have had in forming an union with you? Did you presume I was struck with your personal merit, or think the fordidness of your mind and manners would tempt me?

Flint. Really, Miss, this is carrying---

Miss Lin. You have wealth, I confess; but where could have been the advantage to me, as a reward for becoming your drudge? I might perhaps have received a scanty subsistence, for I can hardly suppose you would grant the free use of that to your wife, which your meanness has deny'd to yourself.

Flint. So, so, so---by and by she will alarm the whole house.

Miss Lin. The whole house! the whole town shall be told. Sure the greatest misfortune that Poverty brings in its train, is the subjecting us to the insults of wretches like this, who have no other merit but what their riches bestow on them.

Flint. What a damnable vixen. [*Aside.*

Miss Lin. Go, Sir; leave the house. I am ashamed, Sir, you have had the power to move me, and never more let me be shock'd with your sight.

Enter

THE MAID OF BATH. 63

Enter Lady Catherine and Mrs. Linnet.

La. Cath. How's aw wi you within? Gad's mercy, what's the matter wi Miss? I will hope, Maister Flint, it is nae you, who ha set her a wailing.

Mrs. Lin. Kitty, my love.

Miss Lin. A modest proposal of that gentleman's making---

La. Cath. Of what kind?

Miss Lin. Only this moment to quit my father and you, and take up my lodging with him.

La. Cath. To night; aw that is quite out of the order of things, that is ne'er done, Maister Flint, till after the ceremony of the nuptials is said.

Flint. No?---Then, I can tell your ladyship, it will never be done.

La. Cath. How?----

Enter Major Racket, Sir Christopher Cripple, and Button.

Sir Chr. We beg pardon for taking the liberty to come in, Mrs. Linnet, but we were afraid some accident might have happened to Miss.---

Mrs. Lin. There has, Sir.

Rack.

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Rack. Of what kind?

Mrs. Lin. That worthy gentleman, under pretence of friendship to us, and honourable views to my daughter, has hatched a treacherous design to inevitably ruin my child.

Sir Chr. What he? Flint!

Mrs. Lin. Even he.

Sir Chr. An impudent son of a----Billy, lead me up, that I may take a peep at the puppy----Your servant young gentleman; what, is it true that we hear? A sweet swain this to tempt a virgin to sin. Why, Old Nick has made a mistake here, he used to be more expert in his angling, for what female on earth can be got to catch this bait?

La. Cath. Haud, haud you, Sir Christopher Cripple, let Maister Flint and I have a short conference upon the occasion---I find, Maister Flint, you ha made a little mistake, but marriage will set aw matters right in the instant. I suppose you persevere to gang wi Mifs to kirk in the morning.

Flint. No, Madam, nor the evening neither.

La. Cath. Mercy a Gad! what do you refuse to ratify the preliminaries?

Flint. I don't say that neither.

Sir Chr. Then name the time in which you will fulfil them---a week?

La. Cath. A fortnight?

Mrs. Lin.

THE MAID OF BATH. 65

Mrs. Lin. A month?

Flint. I won't be bound to no time.

Rack. A rascally evasion of his to avoid an action at law.

Sir Chr. But, perhaps, he may be disappointed in that.

La. Cath. Well, but Maister Flint, are you willing to make Miss a pecuniary acknowledgment for the damage?

Flint. I have done her no damage, and I'll make no reparation.

Rack. Twelve honest men of your country may happen to differ in judgment.

Flint. Let her try if she will---

Sir Chr. And I promise you she shan't be to seek for the means.

La. Cath. If you be nae afraid of the laws, ha you nae sense of shame.

Rack. He sense of shame?

La. Cath. Gad's wull, it shall cum to the proof; you mun ken, good folk, at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted with Maister Fout the play-actor---I will get him to bring the filthy loon on the stage--

Sir Chr. And expose him to the contempt of the world; he richly deserves it.

Flint. Ay, he may write, you may rail, and the people may hiss, and what care I? I have that at home that will keep up my spirits---

La. Cath. At hame?

K

Rack.

66 THE MAID OF BATH.

Rack. The wretch means his money---

Flint. And what better friend can any man have? Tell me the place where its influence fails? Ask that gentleman how he got his eockade. Money! I know its worth, and therefore can't too carefully keep it. At this very instant I have a proof of its value; it enables me to laugh at that squeamish impertinent girl, and despise the weak efforts of your impotent malice---Call me forth to your courts when you please, that will procure me able defenders, and good witnesses too if they are wanted. [Exit.]

Sir Chr. Now there's a fellow that will never reform.

Rack. You had better let him alone, it is in vain to expect justice or honour from him; what a most contemptible cur is a miser?

Sir Chr. Ten thousand times worse than a highwayman: that poor devil only pilfers from Peter or Paul, and the money is scattered as soon as received; but the wretch that accumulates for the sake of secreting, annihilates what was intended for the use of the world, and is a robber of the whole human race.---

Rack. And of himself too into the bargain.

Butt. For all the world like a magpye, he steals for the mere pleasure of hiding.

Rack. Well observed, little Bill.

Butt.

Butt. Why, he wanted to bring me into his plot--yes; he made proposals for me to marry Miss after his purpose was serv'd---

Sir Cbr. How?

Butt. But he was out in his man---let him give his cast cloaths to his coachman, Billy Button can afford a new suit of his own.

Rack. I don't doubt it at all.

Butt. Fellow---I am almost resolved never to set another stitch for him as long as I live.

Sir Cbr. Right, Button, right; but where is Miss Kitty? Come hither, my chicken; faith I am heartily glad you are rid of this scoundrel; and if such a crippled old fellow as me was worthy of your notice---but hold, Kate, there is another chap I must guard you against----

Miss Lin. Another, Sir! who?

Sir Cbr. Why this gentleman.

Rack. Me!

Sir Cbr. Ay, you; come, come Major, don't think you can impose upon a cunning old sportsman like me.

Rack. Upon my soul, Sir Christopher, you make me blush.

Sir Cbr. Oh! you are devilish modest I know---but to come to the trial at once. I have some reason to believe, Major, you are fond of this girl, and that her want of for-

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tune mayn't plead your excuse, I don't think I can better begin my plan of reforming than by a compliment paid to her virtue-- then take her, and with her two thousand guineas in hand.

Mrs. Lin. How, Sir!

Sir Chr. And expect another good spell when Monsieur le Fevre sets me free from the gout.

Butt. Please your Worship, I'll accept her with half----

La. Cath. Gi me leave, Sir Christopher, to throw in the widow's mite on the happy occasion; the bride garment, and her dinner shall be furnished by me.

Sir Chr. Cock-a-leeky soup.

La. Cath. Sheep's head sing'd, a haggies in plenty.

Sir Chr. Well said, Lady Catharine.

Miss Lin. How, Sir, shall I acknowledge this goodness?

Sir Chr. By saying nothing about it--- Well, Sir, we wait your answer.

Rack. I think the lady might first be consulted: I should be sorry a fresh prosecution should follow so fast on the heels of the----

Sir Chr. Come, come, no trifling, your resolution at once.

Rack. I receive, then, your offer with pleasure.

Sir Chr. Miss.

Miss Lin. Sir, there is a little account to be first settled between this gentleman and an old unhappy acquaintance of mine.

Sir Chr. Who?

Miss Lin. The Major can guess---the unhappy Miss Prim.

Sir Chr. You see, Major, your old sins are rising in judgment.

Rack. I believe, Madam, I can satisfy that.

Miss Lin. I sha'n't give you the trouble---but first, let me return you all my most grateful thanks for your kind intentions towards me. I know your generous motives, and feel its value, I hope, as I ought; but might I be permitted to choose, I beg to remain in the station I am; my little talents have hitherto received the public protection, nor whilst I continue to deserve, am I the least afraid of losing my patrons. [Exeunt.

F I N I S.

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be told of the Maid of Bath
in the history of the town.

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